

You Are Supporting Students As They Return to School

Thanks to the support of a generous East King County community, YES is able to provide resources to prepare students for an unpredictable school year.

When schools closed in 2020, many students experienced loneliness, fear, upheaval and grief. Some lost loved ones, others saw their parents lose their jobs and their families sink into poverty.

Now students are preparing for another major transition, returning to in-person education.

"After this past year, kids are worn out and now they need even more energy to transition back to in-person learning. It's just a lot for them and they are feeling overwhelmed."

Observed Kristie Neklason, Director of School-Based Services.

You're helping students ease back in

For youth who are experiencing increasing levels of anxiety as they prepare to return to in-person activities, finding a supportive environment is crucial. Highland Middle School students will find that space at the third annual Highland Health Center Summer Camp. The camp, a partnership between YES and International Community Health Services, will provide students



Thanks to you, students have a safe space to ease into in-person activities.

opportunities to socialize, have fun, learn new skills, and move their bodies.

YES clients can also build their confidence through YES' Summer Hiking Group. Led by two YES co-occurring disorder counselors, the group is designed for youth experiencing depression or anxiety who are looking to get outside, be active, and interact with their peers.

You're helping identify anxious students

Thanks to voters who approved the Best Starts for Kids Levy in 2015, YES has been able to implement SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment), a universal mental health screening program for middle school students.

As students return to school, the screening will help YES and school staff identify students who might be at risk for, or are currently experiencing, a behavioral health concern and connect them with support services and programs.

You're helping improve access to services

Thanks to our community's support at the onset of the pandemic, YES was able to quickly implement TeleHealth services creating a new way for children, youth and families to access mental health and substance use services and programs. YES

plans to permanently adopt virtual access to support the mental health needs, of youth and parents in our community.

How you can help youth today

Not one child has experienced this pandemic in the same way, and no young person will be returning to school in the same way either. But they do have the common experience of facing this challenge together. Kristie Neklason advises parents and caregivers to:

"Recognize and acknowledge their growth. Continue to check in with them, and ask them questions. Ask them to tell you their experience."

WHAT WE DO

Youth Eastside Services (YES) is the leading youth-serving behavioral health agency in East King County for children and youth from birth to age 22, and their families. We provide evidence-based mental health counseling, substance use and co-occurring disorders counseling and treatment, early childhood behavioral health services, psychiatric services, and education and prevention programs. No matter what your financial situation is, you can receive help at YES. We accept most insurance plans, Medicaid, and offer a sliding fee scale.

VOTE TO RENEW BEST START FOR KIDS

This summer, the Best Starts for Kids Levy renewal will appear on your August 2021 ballot. We encourage our community to continue to support the levy, which provides critical support to over half a million children, youth, and families in King County during key windows of their early childhood and adolescent development.

COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAM

With Your Support Latinx Students Are Graduating

The Hispanic community is one of the fastest-growing populations in East King County. According to the 2019-20 Bellevue Human Services Needs Update, Hispanic students now make up 13% of the Bellevue School District. Historically these students had disproportionately lower graduation rates and higher truancy rates than their White and Asian peers.

Providing a safe space

Since 2011, thanks to funding from our community, YES has been able to reach out and support at-risk Hispanic students through our Latinx programs: Latino HEAT at Sammamish High School, Latinos Unidos at Redmond High School, and upcoming this fall, a new group at Juanita High School.



Thanks to you, dropout rates are down!

Ethnicity is a strength

Through these programs, you are helping Hispanic students use their ethnicity as a strength, helping them develop self-esteem, leadership skills, and motivation to achieve academically. Through funding, not only do students have access to weekly support groups but their whole family is offered case management services such as helping with legal applications and referrals to community resources.

Giving back to those who gave

Youth in these programs are inspired to give back to the community that supports them by building unity across cultures and differences through cultural events, addressing systematic racism through talking circles with school administrators, and volunteering in community service.

YES program facilitator and former Latino HEAT member Judith Mercado says,

"When someone believes in you, it's the best feeling. It encourages you to do well for the next generation."

Your gift is making an impact

And thanks to you, these programs are working! In the 2010/2011 school year, for example, roughly 19 percent of Hispanic students dropped out of Sammamish High and 29 percent did so at Redmond High. Now, thanks to your support, dropout rates at both schools are less than 2%!

CLIENT STORY

Daniela Finds Connection During an Isolating Time

Daniela* was only a couple of months old when her family moved to Bellevue from Mexico. The family had to start working hard right away, which created stress and conflict in her home.

In middle school, Daniela had to create a family tree. Her family didn't talk much about their life in Mexico and her father was always working, so her family tree was small.

"I felt weird because everyone had these big family trees and mine was very small. I remember my teacher was mad at me and told me I didn't complete my homework. She made me get a letter signed from my mom that I talked to her about it. I didn't understand why my family was different."

As the pandemic set in, Daniela felt even more isolated and disconnected. Then a family friend told her about Latino HEAT, a support group for Latinx students at Sammamish High School. Even though her first meetings were virtual, Daniela was grateful to have a space to connect with others and learn more about her culture.



Thanks to you Daniela met friends during the pandemic.

"Without Latino HEAT I would be lonely, and isolated. Latino HEAT really impacted me in a positive way and I'm really thankful for everyone in the group and at YES."

Next year, Daniela will graduate high school and she's looking forward to Latino HEAT's special graduation event. She wants to show her appreciation to her family, to Latino HEAT facilitators Tina and Judith, and the other youth in the group, by graduating.

* While the client story told here is true, the name, image, and identifying information have been changed to protect the privacy of the client.

ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

You Helped Surpass the Invest in Youth Fundraising Goal!

On May 6, 2021 our community grabbed their superhero capes for a night of inspiration and hope as we celebrated the resilient strength of youth and honored Mental Health Awareness Month at the annual Invest in Youth fundraiser.

The virtual event featured an incredible story from YES client Pari, a reflection on the challenges facing our community from YES CEO David W. Downing, an inspirational message from keynote speaker Mike Veny, and more.

670 donors, 58 fundraisers, 30 sponsors, and 78 Champions for Youth Giving Circle members helped surpass the goal and raise more than \$820,000.

THANK YOU for ensuring that ALL children, youth and families receive the critical mental health and substance use counseling and treatment they need, regardless of their ability to pay.

If you missed the event, don't worry! You can still enjoy the celebration by watching a full recording of the event on our website.

youtheastideservices.org/investinyouth

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

Corporate Sponsors Creating Positive Change

YES would never be able to offer the breadth of support for children and youth struggling with mental health and substance use challenges if it weren't for the generosity of local and national corporations.

Local commercial contractor business Firstline Systems supports YES because they believe every youth deserves equal opportunity as the leaders of our future.

"Working with Youth Eastside Services has allowed us to come together to bridge the social, economic, and political gaps in our community."

With the economic challenges COVID-19 has caused, making a corporate gift now not only has tax benefits, but creates positive change for youth mental health today.

If you're interested in learning how your company can create positive change for children, youth, and families, please contact Angela Chapman at 206-291-7751 or at angelac@youtheastideservices.org.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Inspired By a Shared Vision for Helping Youth in the Community

Dr. Lorena Shih's journey with YES began with one of its founders, Dr. Lee Vincent. Over 50 years ago, Dr. Vincent helped establish YES because he saw the extent of substance use problems experienced by youth in East King County. At that time, resources to help those in need were nearly non-existent, so Dr. Vincent and the other founders launched YES from a one-room office in Kirkland.

Dr. Vincent shared his vision and passion for helping youth in the community with his partners at Allegro Pediatrics (then called Pediatric Associates). After attending the annual YES breakfast 12 years ago, Dr. Vincent recognized a similar passion in Dr. Shih at Allegro Pediatrics and referred her to the YES Board of Trustees. Dr. Shih has supported YES as a board member and philanthropist ever since.

As a pediatrician, Dr. Shih knows firsthand the turmoil families face when their child is suffering from a mental illness or substance use.

"Children are experiencing adverse childhood events in ways we couldn't imagine when we were growing up. I see it in my practice every day, the stress and burdens that our youth carry with them."

"We have an ongoing mental health crisis unfolding during the pandemic that can be devastating for our community. We support YES because we care deeply about our community's future."

"We donate to YES because it's an investment in children's' futures. We both have friends and family members who have been affected by mental illness. For us, it's imperative to support YES and their mission to be a lifeline to support kids through challenges of emotional distress, substance abuse and violence."



Dr. Lorena Shih with her husband Dr. Thomas Walsh care deeply about the future of children in our community.

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WEBSITE
www.youtheastideservices.org

LOCATIONS

YES serves the Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond and Sammamish communities, and provides on-site services to 50+ elementary, middle and high schools, and teen/community centers in the Bellevue and Lake Washington School Districts.

YES Bellevue (main office)
999 164th Ave NE
Bellevue, WA 98008

YES Kirkland
11829 97th Ave NE
Kirkland, WA 98034

YES Redmond
15600 Redmond Way, #102
Redmond, WA 98052



999 164th Ave NE
Bellevue, WA 98008

MISSION

Youth Eastside Services (YES) is a lifeline for kids and families coping with challenges such as emotional distress, substance abuse and violence. Through intervention, outreach and prevention, YES builds confidence and personal responsibility, strengthens family relationships, and advocates for a safer community that cares for its youth.

YOU CAN MAKE AN IMPACT TODAY

Families Are in Need of Back-to-School Supplies



"One of the youth I work with is now the sole provider for his family. Because of the pandemic both of his parents lost their jobs. Not only that, but now he also has the added stress of returning to school and affording new school supplies," said Judith Mercado, facilitator for YES' Latino HEAT.

Many families still haven't fully recovered from the worst of the pandemic. Nationally, more than one-third of parents reported problems paying for housing, utility, food, or medical costs in the past month, including roughly half of low-income black and Hispanic parents.

You can directly help these families as children return to school by providing gift cards for basic needs and back-to-school supplies.

As a gift card sponsor, you commit to donating gift cards in \$25 or \$50 increments, which will help families during this particularly challenging time.

HELP A FAMILY, GIVE A GIFT CARD

I want to become a gift card sponsor and help youth and families afford back-to-school supplies.

GIVE TODAY!

youtheastideservices.org/giftcards

*Donations made to YES ensure that ALL children, youth, and families in East King County have access to mental health and substance use treatment, psychiatric care, and recovery support; **regardless of their ability to pay.***